Brandon first provincial digital mammography site

Manitoba patients are reaping the benefits of a comprehensive, fully integrated provincial system for digital mammography with the first equipment going live in Brandon.

“The introduction of digital mammography will support continued high-quality breast cancer detection for Manitobans,” said Health Minister Sharon Blady. “Manitobans will continue to get the care they need, but with confidence that expertise is now available more quickly as the system allows radiologists to share images, no matter where the individual lives.”

Digital mammography allows radiologists to view images on a workstation monitor. This will allow faster sharing of images as they can be stored and shared electronically rather than transferred to film.

“With our partners, we continue to enhance timely access to programs and services for residents of Prairie Mountain Health (PMH). By adding the region’s first digital mammography unit in Brandon, patients will gain faster access to diagnosis and treatment,” said Penny Gilson, Chief Executive Officer of PMH. “We remain committed to improving strategies aimed at building a healthier population and creating a quality, integrated and sustainable health system.”

The minister noted the launch of services in Brandon is the first step in the roll-out of digital mammography services across the province. Other sites will receive digital mammography over the next several months, and new digital mobile screening vehicles will be introduced.

“By working together, we are better able to move forward and provide the best possible care for Manitobans”, said Jim Slater, chief executive officer of Diagnostic Services Manitoba. “The steadfast commitment and collaborative efforts of the Digital Mammography Steering Committee tasked to implement this service has

...continued on Page 2
resulted in a comprehensive, provincial system for all breast screening and diagnostic procedures across Manitoba”.

Breast cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer among women in Manitoba, with almost 900 cases diagnosed each year. About 90,000 Manitobans have a mammogram every year, with about 50,000 done as screening mammograms through CancerCare Manitoba’s BreastCheck program.

Many partners are involved in this work including Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, CancerCare Manitoba and the CancerCare Manitoba Foundation, Diagnostic Services Manitoba, regional health authorities and Manitoba eHealth.

PMH to receive new ambulances

Prairie Mountain Health Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is receiving 12 new replacement ambulance units as part of a recent government announcement to enhance the provincial ambulance fleet. The total $6.2-million investment to purchase 52 new replacement ambulances province-wide was unveiled September 1, 2015.

The new ambulances will help provide a more comfortable and safer ride for patients while reducing the risk of injury to paramedics.

After extensive research and testing, the ambulances will have what is known as ‘liquid-spring suspension’. Testing took place over the course of a year to make sure the system would work in all types of Manitoba weather. Costs for the new suspension system are included in the full ambulance vehicle cost.

Louise Stitt, Regional EMS Manager for PMH, says that all 12 ambulances should be allocated over the next few months. Although some details of the regional allocation plan are still being finalized, Brandon will receive two of the new units and Dauphin and Swan River will each be getting one.

Stitt says the remaining ambulances will likely be placed at sites where there is the highest inter-facility transfer call volume. These are situations where a patient has to travel a long distance by ambulance.

Stitt adds, the new ambulances also have improved safety features such as alerts if a vehicle’s speed is too high, the braking is too hard and/or where cornering would be too sharp. These measures support safe operation of the vehicles, which in turn, offers safer rides for patients and staff.

PMH Board releases Strategic Plan

Prairie Mountain Health (PMH) has developed a new five-year Strategic Plan.

The 2016-2021 Strategic Plan outlines a ‘high-level vision’ that will help guide the organization going forward. The Strategic ‘roadmap’ identifies the health region’s six priorities that are aimed at building a healthier population and creating a quality, integrated and sustainable health system.

PMH Board Chair Marg MacDonald says the Strategic Plan, which officially takes effect on April 1, 2016, is a culmination of many months of consultations, statistical analysis and input both internally and externally.

“We are essentially building upon our community engagement processes that assisted with the recent completion of our comprehensive 2015 Community Health Assessment,” MacDonald added. “I thank all staff, managers, physicians as well as our Local Health Involvement Groups for their input and feedback into this very important health planning document.”

PMH Chief Executive Officer Penny Gilson says the PMH Board is responsible for establishing and approving the Strategic Plan.

“Guided by objectives set forth by Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, the operational strategies and goals listed within the Strategic Plan were developed following extensive discussion with PMH program and services’ teams about their long term goals and priorities. The priorities within the plan remain constant over a five-year period and the associated indicators and performance measures will be monitored regularly by our Regional Leadership Team and the Board of Directors of Prairie Mountain Health,” Gilson stated.

The Strategic Plan lists six priorities. They include:

- Improved service delivery;
- Improved access to care;
- Capacity building;
- Health system innovation;
- Health system sustainability; and
- Improving health status and reducing disparities.

The 2016-2021 Strategic Plan can be found on the PMH website at: prairiemountainhealth.ca
PMH Board holds third Annual General Meeting

Prairie Mountain Health (PMH) held its Annual General Meeting for the fiscal year of April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015. The meeting was held September 22nd at the Elkhorn Resort near Clear Lake. The meeting featured a review of some of the more significant events and initiatives that transpired during the last year. It also provided a fiscal overview through the annual audited financial statements.

The health region finished the fiscal year with just over a $5.4-million deficit. This compared to a surplus in 2013/2014 that was just over $7-million. Some of the reasons for the shortfall included a one-time funding allotment of $5-million—which was received in 2013/2014 (and not this past fiscal year) as well as an approval of a number of business cases, some of which meant adding more staffing for Personal Care Homes.

Other highlights from the past year included:

- Development of the first-ever comprehensive Community Health Assessment;
- Continuing work on a new Strategic Plan (2016-2021);
- Launching the first “My Health Team” in Brandon;
- Operating the Mobile Clinic for the first complete year in six communities; and
- Moving forward on provincial priorities like the Family Doctor Finder Program and cancer care.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to update residents on key capital planning projects like the Swan Valley Primary Care Centre in Swan River, the Dauphin Regional Health Centre ER and MRI projects, the Brandon Regional Health Centre general redevelopment and the Ste. Rose Primary Health Care Centre. The region also re-affirmed that its top capital planning priority remains as the joint Minnedosa/Neepawa Health Centre.

The Board’s Annual Report can be found on the PMH website at prairiemountainhealth.ca

PMH Board of Directors Report: September 2015

The PMH Board of Directors met on Tuesday, September 22, 2015.

The Board received an update on the recent Local Health Involvement Group (LHIG) meetings. They were pleased to appoint Barb Thompson to LHIG #3. The Board approved the Terms of Reference for the Local Health Involvement Groups and they continue to encourage applications from interested members of the public to join the LHIGs.

Among other meeting highlights:

- The Board received an update from the Regional Ethics Committee. New members were appointed to the regional committee to fill vacant positions;
- The Board received Financial Reports for the months of May, June and July 2015 and also received a report on 2014-15 Cost Saving initiatives the Region had undertaken. Savings were realized in the amount of $ 3,403,838;
- The Board received reports from the Finance, Audit, and Quality & Safety Board Committees;
- The Board reviewed the current Wait Time Performance Review. All wait times are under the provincial target wait time with the exception of:
  - Cataract wait times in Minnedosa;
  - MRI wait times in Brandon diagnostic imaging; and
  - Urgent and elective colonoscopies.

Strategies are being implemented to address the areas above provincial targets, where feasible.

The next meeting of the Prairie Mountain Health Board of Directors will be held Wednesday, October 28th.
Parkland Residency Unit holds ‘rural’ day

The Parkland Family Medicine program hit the road and had the opportunity to visit three local farms on September 25, 2015. Family Medicine residents, in both the first and second years of the Parkland Residency Program, visited farms in the rural communities of Sifton, Pine River, and Ashville. The tour included a grain farming production, a cattle ranch, and a bee farm. The group also stopped in the Village of Ethelbert and enjoyed a Ukrainian lunch and toured the Ethelbert clinic, where many residents will spend time with Parkland family medicine preceptors.

The Prokopowich farm located near Sifton was the group’s first stop of the day. The group met with farmers Peter Prokopowich and James Stoesz and reviewed many topics including, the cost of farming in the Parkland area, the stressors that farm families face, and the imminent dangers of farming. Residents had the opportunity to observe the functioning of several pieces of machinery such as an auger, swather, combine, and anhydrous applicator. As per the 1995 Canadian Family Physician article: ‘Agriculture-related injuries in the Parkland region of Manitoba’—greater than 60% of farming injuries seen in the Dauphin Hospital from January 1981 to December 1991 were due to agricultural machinery.

The group proceeded to the Ketel Ranch outside of Pine River. Ralph and Gwyn Ketel have been ranching in this area for 20 years and specialize in cow calf production. As Gwyn noted, cow calf operations includes the full spectrum from breeding to prenatal to calving and marketing cows. The group was able to review the equipment used for managing feed, the realities of a rancher’s life during calving season, and the tools used in obstetrical deliveries. The group was able to learn hands on the dangers of working with large animals, and the potential injuries that a rancher can sustain in our variable climate (such as animal kicks, frost bite and hypothermia).

…..continued on Page 6
PMH readies annual flu campaign

Prairie Mountain Health (PMH) is once again getting ready to roll out its fall immunization campaign this fall. Every year, the flu season in Manitoba begins in late fall and usually lasts until spring. For 2015-2016, the flu vaccine is available free of charge to all Manitobans. It offers protection against four flu virus strains, including H1N1.

The first flu clinic in Brandon is slated for Saturday, October 17th. In PMH North, the first clinics are set for Barrows and Dauphin Oct. 19th and in PMH South, the first clinics are scheduled for the communities of Holland, Pierson and Rossburn Oct. 20th.

*Watch for ads and posters in your home community advertising flu clinic dates and locations. Also check out the PMH website, Facebook page and Twitter page for more information!*

What is the Flu and How is it Spread?

The flu is not a stomach virus, nor is it the common cold. The flu is a respiratory virus, and it is spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes. You can also get the flu when a person touches a surface with flu virus on it and then touches his or her nose, mouth, or eyes. The flu is very contagious, and people can spread the virus before they show any symptoms. Some people will not have symptoms, but can carry the virus and spread it to others. The flu can lead to serious complications such as bacterial infections, bronchitis, pneumonia, and kidney or heart failure.

What is the Flu Vaccine?

For most people, the flu vaccine is given as a needle in the arm. Healthy children 2 to 17 years of age can also receive a spray that is put inside the nose (FluMist®). All flu vaccines are approved by Health Canada, and will be provided at no charge to Manitobans.

Every year, scientists monitor the global spread of flu and decide what flu viruses will most likely cause widespread illness. The flu vaccine helps your body recognize these flu viruses so it can protect you.

Why Do I Need A Flu Shot Every Year?

Because flu viruses change over time, each year a new flu vaccine has to be developed. The protection offered by a flu shot will also decrease over time, so it very important to get a flu shot every year.

Who Should Get the Flu Vaccine?

The flu vaccine is recommended for all Manitobans over 6 months of age. Some people are at greater risk of serious complications from the flu. The flu vaccine is strongly recommended for the following individuals: Children age 6 months to 59 months, those with a chronic illness, seniors aged 65 years or older, healthy pregnant women, residents of personal care homes or long-term care facilities, health care workers and first responders, individuals of Aboriginal ancestry, and people who are severely overweight or obese. The flu vaccine is also recommended for household contacts or caregivers of these people.

Are There Any Side Effects?

Vaccines are known to be very safe. It is much safer to get the flu vaccine than to get the flu. The most common side effect of the injectable flu vaccine is redness, soreness, and swelling where the needle was given. Some people will experience muscle aches or fever, lasting 1-2 days. With the intranasal flu vaccine, the most common side effects are a runny nose or nasal congestion.

How do I Find out More Information about the Flu?

You can contact your local public health office, nurse practitioner, pharmacy, or physician clinic. You can also visit www.gov.mb.ca/health/flu/index.html for more information on the flu and to find flu clinics in your area.

**PLEASE NOTE:** For the 2015-2016 flu season, the intranasal (FluMist) flu vaccine will also be available. However, due to production delays, FluMist may not be available until the week of October 26th. For more information please contact your local public health office.
A new Nurse Practitioner has joined the team of staff at the Glenboro Medical Clinic. Brittany Vrooman, from Glenboro, commenced her new role at the health clinic in early September. Vrooman will be helping to provide primary care services at the clinic, along with the physicians, nurses, and other health-care providers in the unit.

A Nurse Practitioner (NP) is able to provide many of the services that are currently offered by a family physician. The scope of practice from a Nurse Practitioner includes tasks such as completing assessments and physical exams; diagnosing and managing common issues and diseases; performing minor procedures; prescribing medications and therapies; ordering diagnostic tests; and referring to other providers. NPs work in collaboration and consultation with physicians and other health-care providers, and are a relatively new health care addition seen by patients in Canada. NPs can be found working in a variety of settings including primary care clinics and personal care home, which Vrooman will be providing services to regularly.

In order to apply to become a Nurse Practitioner, one must be a Registered Nurse with a Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing, and a minimum of two (2) years post-degree nursing experience. Then you can apply to the University of Manitoba for the Nurse Practitioner (Master of Nursing) Program, which is another two years of graduate education, including a practicum. There are also other programs available through various other universities in Canada including Athabasca and University of Saskatchewan.

Vrooman had been working in Killarney as a Nurse Practitioner since completing her Masters of Nursing in the Nurse Practitioner stream in the fall of 2014. Prior to becoming a Nurse Practitioner, she has worked in the Diabetes and Heart Health Program and in acute care.

In the Prairie Mountain Health region there are currently 12 NPs on staff. They are based in, Glenboro, Boissevain, Carberry, Wawanesa, Erickson, Birtle, Russell, Roblin and the 7th Street Health Access Centre in Brandon. NP’s also provide service on the Prairie Mountain Health Mobile Clinic, which has seen patients in the region since February 2014. The Mobile Clinic now visits five locations in our region.

Brittany will be working Monday to Friday. To schedule an appointment contact the Glenboro Medical Clinic at 204-827-2633.